

# LETTUCE AND ROMAINE HARVESTING MACHINE AND METHOD

## ABSTRACT

5           A produce harvesting apparatus of the invention includes a conveyor system  
having conveyor belt driven over rollers by a drive element. The belt includes  
cushioned produce holders suitable for maintaining produce products in a desired  
orientation on the belt during operation. The apparatus includes a coring station  
suitable for coring harvested lettuce. The apparatus includes a loading station  
10 wherein the cored lettuce is loaded onto the cushioned produce holders and carried to  
an application station where shelf life extending materials are applied to the cut  
portions of the lettuce. The processed lettuce then proceeds to an unloading station  
where it is removed from the conveyor belt. Other inventive aspects include the  
conveyor belt having cushioned produce holders and the coring station as well as  
15 methods of implementing the disclosed devices.